

Members

Rep. Phil Pflum, Chairperson
Rep. Dale Grubb
Rep. Don Lehe
Rep. Tom Knollman
Sen. Johnny Nugent
Sen. Phil Boots
Sen. Richard Young
Sen. Robert Deig



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

LSA Staff:

Karen Firestone, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee
Steven Wenning, Attorney for the Committee

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Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 1, 2008
Meeting Time: 1 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Phil Pflum, Chairperson; Rep. Dale Grubb; Rep. Don Lehe;
Rep. Tom Knollman; Sen. Johnny Nugent; Sen. Phil Boots; Sen.
Richard Young; Sen. Robert Deig.

Members Absent: None.

Call to Order

Rep. Phil Pflum, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. He asked the members to introduce themselves and then called upon the Acting Director of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Ken Klemme, to discuss the written answers to the written questions prepared by the Committee. (Committee questions and the ISDA's written responses are Exhibit A.)

Questions and Answers

The questions and answers discussed covered topics including the increasing spending on personal services and decreasing spending on grants; the ISDA staffing model; and additional details on personal services contracts, a loan from the Value-Added Research Fund, the AEDI program by county, the E85 station program, and on the future of BioTown.

Rep. Pflum called on Sen. Robert Deig who had an additional question concerning whether the ISDA's role should include promotion and regulation. Mr. Klemme said that it can be difficult to do both, but that the roles may not be able to be separated. He noted that the ISDA current

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regulatory duties concerning grain and soil are voluntary on the part of the person regulated. Sen. Deig then asked if the ISDA met regularly with other state agencies concerned with agriculture. Mr. Klemme indicated they do meet if a question comes up, but there are no regular meetings.

Rep. Dale Grubb asked if the staffing for the grain buyers warehouse and soil conservation were sufficient. Mr. Klemme indicated that the field staff had not been reduced since he had been there. He said that the staff size was adequate. Even though the staff level is lower than other states, the losses in Indiana are similar to other states.

In response to another question from Rep. Grubb, Mr. Klemme indicated that the loan from the Value-Added Research Fund defrays the costs of the fundraising staff for a venture capital company. He said that the staff believe that they are close to having their first close. This event would trigger the repayment of the loan. Mr. Klemme indicated that the venture fund will fund projects in Indiana and around the Midwest, which will benefit Indiana. He indicated that there is no guarantee that the loan will be repaid and pointed out that if the money had been given as a grant, there would be no opportunity to be repaid.

With no more questions, Rep. Pflum quoted James Madison, saying that the Committee had been convened to oversee the use of the new powers given in the restructuring of agricultural functions into the ISDA and that the Committee had fulfilled that charge.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:57 pm.